

HOLIDAY CROWDS SEE RAF CHASE 'THING'

AN R A F helicopter was sent up last night to investigate a mysterious round object in the sky.

The object was visible over a large area of Kent. It was reported all round the coast from Sheppey to Folkestone.

More than 40 telephone calls asking what it was were made to Folkestone coastguards.

A coastguard said: "One man asked me to assure his daughter that it was safe to go to bed."

On cliffs

In many other parts of the county police and coastguards were flooded with inquiries. Margate police had 70 calls.

Hundreds of people collected on the cliffs near Kingsdown to watch the object.

It stayed almost still, and after dark it shone and changed colour.

But after three hours of mystery the investigating helicopter, from R A F Manston, reported: "It's a weather balloon."

A police spokesman explained: "The balloon was so high that when the sun dropped below the horizon it was still catching the rays. It changed colour with the setting sun."